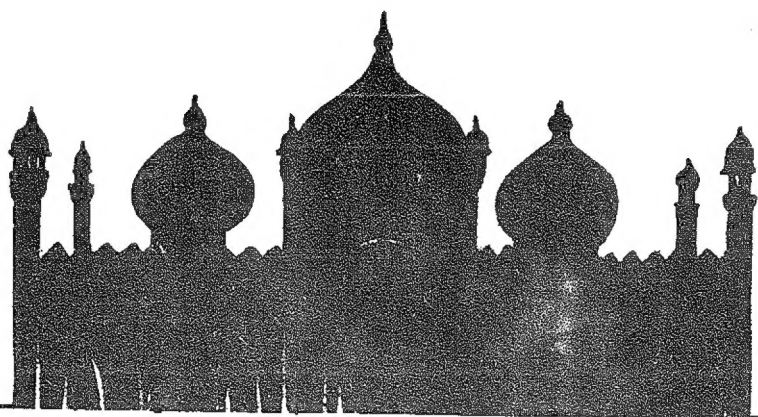


از الذين عند الله الاسلام

the **MUSLIM SUNRISE**



NOVEMBER 1977

In this issue:

ISLAM AND WORLD PEACE

Announcing an International Conference on the
DELIVERANCE OF JESUS FROM THE CROSS

LIFE SKETCH OF KHALIFATUL MASIH I

CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE IN QURAN



THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

VOLUME XLIV

NOVEMBER 1977

NUMBER 3

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MUSLIM SUNRISE

The Muslim Sunrise is a quarterly magazine, founded in 1921 by Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, the first Muslim missionary in the U.S.A. The magazine is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, founded by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India (1835–1908). Mirza Ghulam Ahmad proclaimed to be the Promised Messiah. The Movement is currently headed by Hazrat Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad – the third successor to the Promised Messiah – with headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan. The Movement aims at presenting to the world the true meaning and teaching of Islam. The U. S. headquarters of the Movement are located at:

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Published by the Editor, Mian Muhammad Ibrahim, for the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, from 637 Randolph Street, Dayton, Ohio, 45408. (513 / 268-5512).

EDITORIAL NOTES

A WELL-DESERVED RECOGNITION

Of all the religious institutions and dispensations, Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam preaches as well as practises the teachings of Islam about tolerance, appreciation of good in other religions, and universal brotherhood. Islam aims at establishing peace, order and harmony among the nations of the world. True to the Islamic traditions, the members of the Ahmadiyya Community strive to contribute their mite towards the reduction, nay elimination, of crime in their respective localities, and abstain absolutely from using force and violence and resorting to drugs and intoxicants which lead to personal and racial conflicts and disturb our civic and national tranquility. Cooperation with and loyalty to the recognized authorities of law and order is also the hallmark of the Ahmadiyya Community.

These typical features of the Ahmadiyya Community were adequately recognized at the reception given at Dayton, Ohio, by the Midwest and Lakes regions Jamaats (chapters) in honor of Hazrat Mirza Mubarak Ahmad, Director-General of the missionary activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, on November 6, 1977, among others, by the Honorable Mayor, James H. MacGee, and Judge Jackson.

Hazrat Mirza Mubarak Ahmad eloquently delivered in his address the message of Islam about peace and its solution of the economic, racial and political problems of the day. (The full text of this scholarly discourse appears in the current issue of the Muslim Sunrise.) Bro. Muzaffar Ahmad, local and regional President, in his welcome speech had briefly touched upon some of the humanitarian aspects of activities conducted by the local community, irrespective of caste, color and creed, with a view to creating a homogeneous society conducive to ideal civic life. Instinctively prompted to recognize the healthy contribution of the Ahmadiyya Community in

the said direction, the Honorable Mayor rose to remark that Ahmadiyya Movement is the only dispensation which not only preaches precepts of peace but also translates them into actual practice. Its selfless service to the local community was really commendable. Likewise, Judge Jackson appreciated the almost zero crime rate in the Ahmadiyya Community and held it as a model worthy of emulation.

The Mayor later presented the key to the city of Dayton to the distinguished visitor, under whose guidance and inspiration as Incharge of international missionary activities, the Ahmadiyya Communities in America are engaged in catholic and cosmopolitan activities.

Personal Note:

The undersigned, Mian Muhammad Ibrahim, Missionary Midwest Region and Editor of the Muslim Sunrise since 1973, wishes to express his deep debt of gratitude to all those writers and colleagues who, through their valuable contributions, made it possible for him to keep the Muslim Sunrise. He honestly feels that without their help, it would not have been possible for him to publish the quarterly journal and do his little mite to present the Ahmadiyya interpretation of Islam to this country through its columns.

The undersigned is shortly proceeding home after having completed his assignment in this country.

Subsequent issues will, we hope, entrusted as they will be to the care of more efficient and better qualified hands, will supply the need and demand for thorough and standard articles befitting the pages of this national publication.

Muhammad Ibrahim

ISLAM AND WORLD PEACE

By

Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad

(Speech delivered at Dayton, Ohio, on November 6, 1977)

I have chosen this topic — Islam and world peace — because of its obvious importance to all today.

World peace has never been in greater danger than it is today; with conflicts between the different nations and the various peoples, with all the deadly weapons of war which have been invented. At the same time peace has never been so sorely needed as it is today, and it is for a simple reason. After trial and error spread over ages, mankind had at last done away with at least one kind of warfare; namely warfare for religion. However great our dislike or intolerance for one another's religion, we had come to think that we should not wage war on one another on the score of religion; at least not openly as was done in the time of every prophet in the past. Persecution for religion perhaps but no religious wars.

With religious wars more or less a thing of the past, mankind might have gone on to establish a life of free belief, of peaceful communication and argument between people, to reach a universal and generally acceptable system of regulating relations not only between man and man but also between man on the one hand and God on the other. But this was not to be. Racial, economic, and political differences on national as well as international level were to become acute and dominate and divide the nations of the world into hostile camps. This is most unfortunate but it at least shows that the charge levelled against religion from times immemorial, that religion makes for wars, is not true. It is the human lust for power or pride, for culture or of race, or things of this kind which make for war. So much is proved clearly by the contemporary world scene.

Religious wars have ever been imposed on defenceless

believers or teachers of some belief which their oppressors perceived as a threat to their security, their prestige or their leadership. With peace in the sphere of religion more or less assured, if we had or can now have peace also in spheres outside religion, mankind might have marched or might still march on to unlimited progress both material and spiritual.

But peace does not seem assured at all, so that we human beings have to make a gigantic effort to achieve it.

Peace — world peace I mean — is, therefore, important. But why do I connect world peace with Islam? Because the concern of Islam for peace is very great; it has been and is greater, I claim, than that of any other religion or ideology. Islam, from the very beginning, conceived its message as universal. A message meant for all people, black, white, yellow, brown, rich, poor, developed, underdeveloped, and so on. Islam also teaches a synthesis of religious messages, reverence for all teachers of religion. It was and is a message to liberate mankind from shackles of various kinds and put them on the highway of peace and progress. Peace within the human family as a whole and peace between human family and their God and Maker.

Not finding the prospects of peace so rosy, thinking Muslims everywhere, as indeed all religious people everywhere feel concerned about peace. But what can Muslims, as Muslims, do for peace? Perhaps many would think that Muslims can do little or nothing about it. Muslims are not a great bloc or combination of powers. Their responsibility for peace cannot be great; their concern for peace need not be great. But no, just as wars begin in the minds of men, so do thoughts and plans for peace begin in the minds of men, in the correct sort of attitude and in the correct sort of readiness and preparation for peace. Muslims, therefore, with their experience of 1400 years, with a teaching which achieved so much in its first encounter with human problems, with the unique example of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace)

whom Providence placed literally in all sorts of human situations; Muslims with their rich experience and inheritance could really do much for peace.

The experience of Islam is unique. It confronted and abolished racial and tribal differences. It promoted institutions and methods for the liquidation of slavery and for the dissolution of economic subordination of all kinds. It also taught methods for the prevention and settlement of conflicts between large organized groups of people.

Slaves were to become a thing of the past as soon as Islam came. There were to be no slaves in an Islamic order. In a formally declared religious war — which is really a war on freedom — involving bloodshed on a large scale, aggressors could be made slaves as we may make prisoners of war. But soon after, the slaves could obtain the status of free citizens either as a gift by their captors, or on payment of ransom or through an agreement to work and earn the ransom money, and so on. Those who chose to remain slaves even after these offers of freedom were to be treated on a basis of equality with their captors. Women slaves could be taken in marriage; but they became free as soon as they became mothers. Men and women slaves were to be encouraged to marry; to maintain moral health in society.

Economic subordination has always been discouraged by Islam through its economic statutes. Interest is banned, so a rich man cannot live on his riches. Savings are charged at the rate of 2½%; this being the institution of Zakaat under which savings cannot go on enlarging, not without cuts in the interest of the poor, the needy, the rest of society. Properties left by the deceased must be fragmented between a large number of heirs; they cannot concentrate in the hands of a few. The Promised Messiah, founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, applied the provisions of Islam further to abolish economic subordination or economic disparity. He founded the institution of Wasiyyat or the voluntary willing

away of properties. Islam permits Muslims to a maximum of 1/3 of one's total assets to will away to others. The holy founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement asked Ahmadi Muslims to will away from 1/10 to 1/3 of their properties to promote the wider interests of Islamic charity. With such provisions there could be no super rich class among believing and practising Muslims. There is no such class among Ahmadi Muslims. These results are secured through a voluntary renunciation of wealth.

But I said that Islam also taught methods for the liquidation of conflicts between organized peoples. It is really amazing that Islam anticipated an ideal United Nations. For this, read the Chapter 49 (*Al-Hujurat*) of the Holy Quran. In it you will find, among other things, the startling provision that if two sovereign groups of believers resort to open hostilities, it becomes the duty of other believing groups to make peace between the groups which choose to go to war; and if after the award of peace terms, one of the groups persists in fighting, then it is the duty of all the other groups to fight the delinquent group to submission. A provision of this kind, seriously upheld, must put an end to war and promote instead the interests of peace.

One supreme question today is: can we have or should we have national groups. Many people would abolish national groups. But it would be fantastic even if it were desirable to think that national groups could be abolished with a stroke of the pen or, as it were, by a simple resolution. National groups today merge into larger international groups. Such international groups tend to become blocs of powers. The difficulties of peace remain as ever. An international group to promote peace must become a world group, a world community. Very good, but what do we do until such a thing becomes possible? There have to be national groups until then, and national groups at peace with themselves and at peace with others. Within each national group there have to be distinctions of first and second class citizens and so on.

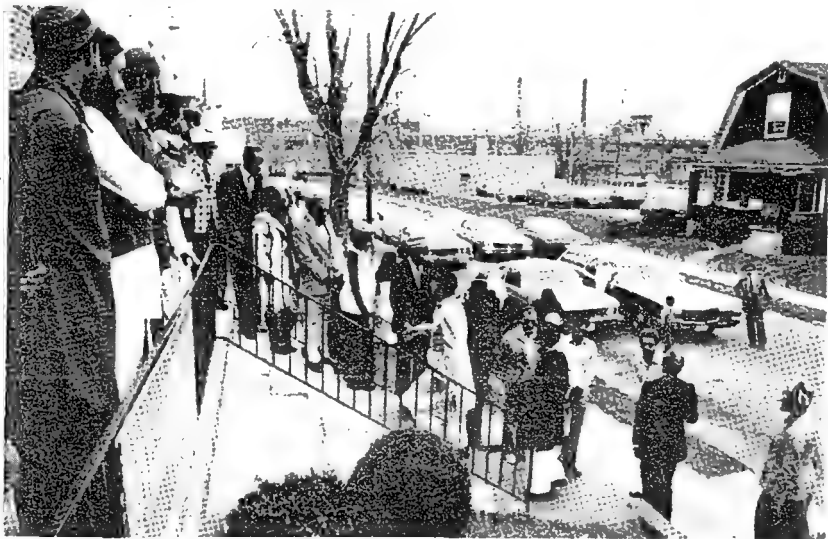
Islam created a national group in the city of Medina when the Holy Prophet (On whom be peace) migrated to Medina under the pressure of Meccan oppression. He found himself voted by Muslims, Jews and others to the Headship of the new Medina State. By accepting this, the Holy Prophet inaugurated a great development in Statehood by producing the famous treaty of Medina. This treaty has about 70 clauses. Its basic clauses secure agreement in two points:

- (i) that the parties subscribing to the Treaty will stand by the principle of religious freedom, and
- (ii) that they will jointly defend the city if it is attacked from outside. This conceded the parties became one nation, and all *equal* citizens of one state.

There was no further qualification for citizenship. True, the treaty also provided that any further disputes — constitutional or other civil disputes between the contracting groups — were to be referred to God and His Prophet. This was a merciful provision. The most perfect constitutional apparatus must face unforeseen disagreements and disputes. What is to be done then? The contracting parties to the Treaty of Medina agreed that such disputes would be arbitrated upon by the Holy Prophet. *Not arbitrarily* but in accordance with a known and steadily unfolding law, the law of Islam, which was to be binding on the Holy Prophet and his Muslim followers. This merciful provision completed the treaty. A pluralistic society, a society made up of several smaller societies, emerging as a state could have no better foundation.

The genius of Islam, in short, favors the promotion of peace through contracts, through law, through the combined strength of smaller groups in a nation and through the combined prestige of a parliament of nations.

Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad visited the Fazl-i-Umar Mosque, Dayton, on November 6, 1977, where he delivered the foregoing address on Islam and World Peace. Pictures show:



Members of the Jamaat lining up to welcome Hazrat Mian Sahib.



Hazrat Mian Sahib conversing with the Honorable Mayor of Dayton on the front steps of the mosque.

SOME REFLECTIONS

By

Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir

Director, International Studies Institute
C.W. Post Center of Long Island University

Waiting for New Reformers and Messiahs.

The phenomenon of mankind's perpetual hunger for spiritual guidance is undeniable. From the beginning of times people continue to yearn and crave for that eternal peace of mind which comes only through the divine revelation. It is a natural and self-evident need.

The ironic fact, however, is that many a times the fountain of the life-giving water of revelation to satisfy the needs of the spirit happens to be close at hand. Yet, alas! man's misfortunes mislead his direction. Rather than benefit from what has already been provided for him by the Sustainer of the universes, he continues his agonizingly futile search in the avenues which lead to nowhere.

It may be recalled, for instance, that almost two thousand years ago, Jesus appeared among the Israelites in fulfilment of the prophecies foretold about his advent by the earlier prophets. Yet it was only a small minority who recognized his truth. The skeptics kept on asking if he was the promised one but never accepted him. A large number of his own people rejected him with scorn and ridicule.

The return of Christ has also been awaited with equally serious and painful anticipation. Many a voices have been raised in the past to declare that the time of his his return is near. Many others, rather wishfully, have been fixing even the time and place of the second advent of Christ.

One recent example of this search for the return of Christ has been foreseen by Mr. Hal Lindsey of the Evangelical Christian Prophecy Movement. In his best-selling book, *The*

Late Great Planet Earth, he claims that the current oil crisis and Arab-Israeli conflict over Jerusalem "make the prophetic pattern immediately preceding the Second Coming even closer than I thought a year ago." In his estimation, the return of the Messiah must take place by the year 2000 A.D. He points to what he terms evidence that Jesus will return to judge and rule the world *in this generation*. He says:

"The Arabs and Israelis are drawing in the whole world. Arab possession of proven oil resources is the key. Tension revolves around the Arab summit demand of the return of all Arab lands, including old Jerusalem."

Mr. Lindsey contends that the Biblical prophecy in regards to the return of the Messiah is vitally tied with the far-reaching consequences of the contemporary political developments. He considers that the Israelis will never agree to the surrender of the Old Jerusalem after they conquered it in 1967. "There's no way the Israelis will give up Old Jerusalem," Mr. Lindsey asserts, "It's non-negotiable. They would rather see their nation destroyed."

So, here is another one of the numerous speculations about the time and circumstances of Christ's return or Second Advent. Let us hope that the evangelists like Lindsey can look around for the Promised one with the attitude that he might have already appeared. Since the beginning of the world, mankind has always waited too long to recognize the divinely raised reformers.

The Dilemmas of the Biblical Interpretation.

The traditional attitude among the Christians of various denominations about the Bible used to be that of a strictly literal interpretation. It was considered to be an absolutely categorical and inflexible dogma of both the Catholic and Protestant churches to believe in every word of the Bible as divinely inspired which is not subject to interpretation.

However, this direction of strict and literal interpretation has received a series of fatal blows in the twentieth century. The church has continued to retreat helplessly against the relentless onslaught of the constantly expanding scientific dimensions.

It was perhaps easier for the radical and liberal Christian movements to face the problem by their frank admission of the elements of human errors in the Biblical text. They even called some parts of the Christian scriptures as "fanciful falsehoods." However, it proved to be a terribly complex dilemma for the more orthodox believers in the Bible.

One of such centers of orthodoxy is the Concordia Seminary of the Lutherans in St. Louis, Mo. In 1974, some 450 of the 500 students and 50 of the 60 members of the faculty of this, one of the most prestigious conservative theological institutions in the States, walked off the campus. The issue of conflict, as reported by *The Christian Science Monitor* (March 4, 1974), was how literally are the Scriptures to be interpreted? And, will modern teaching methods threaten the Lutheran church claiming some three million followers in the country? Finally, who should make the rules that guide men in seeking answers to such questions?

The students and the teachers of the Concordia Seminary contended that the operators of the institute, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, the third largest body among the American Lutherans, would not permit an open pursuit of the Biblical teachings independent of the ecclesiastical control or domination. The reactions of the denomination's leadership against this self-imposed exile were accurately expressed by its president Dr. Jacob Preus who called this move "anarchy" and a "sordid affair."

What bothers the rebelling scholars is the painful problem that if the Bible is interpreted literally then it becomes impossible to make it applicable in lives. The radical group of Concordia felt so concerned about the problem that they

even chose to take this unusual step of self-exile even at the risk of being deprived of ordination.

More specifically, their problem arises from the story of Adam and Eve as narrated in the Bible (Genesis: 2). On the one hand, is their traditional belief in the entire text of the Scripture as the divine revelation. Yet, on the other, modern science would lead them to accept that Adam and Eve are only part of an allegory and not actual historical characters. The trouble is that the very foundations of the doctrine of the "Original Sin" stems from the literal acceptance of the Biblical version of the Adam and Eve story. Consequently, the dogma of redemption as given by the church is totally destroyed unless the basic premise of the sinfulness of man is accepted. Or, as Dr. Preus explained, "If we accept that the creation story is an allegory, won't the next step be to say that the crucifixion and resurrection are myth?"

The fact is that the Lutheran church is not alone in confronting this dilemma. The entire Christian world shares these doubts and apprehensions in regard to the problem of the interpretation of the Bible and other related doctrines of the crucifixion, ascension and redemption. One wonders what is left of the original concept of Christianity once these fundamental doctrines are rejected.

The Problem of Occupied Arab Lands: What Lies Ahead for Israel?

As a result of the 1967 war, Israel vastly expanded her control over the Arab lands. In addition to the annexation of Old Jerusalem, she succeeded in the occupation of the West Bank of the Jordan river, the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza strip. While there were already a substantial number of Arabs within the pre-1967 boundaries of Israel, the new annexations brought on sharp increase in the "non-Jewish" population. At present, the Arabs within the pre-1967 Israel have been given the status of Israeli citizenship.

The newly annexed areas, however, are under varying degrees of a military rule. These territories have been the focus of fierce and heated discussions in various international forums. On the one hand, the Arabs demand a 100 percent return of the entire occupied lands, the present Israeli government of the Likud party, led by Prime Minister Menachem Begin, is systematically establishing a large number of new Jewish settlements to make the return of these territories virtually impossible. This polarized situation has provided one of the most formidable stumbling blocks toward convening any Arab-Israeli peace conference.

It is interesting to observe that many scholars within Israel are in sharp disagreement with the policy of the annexation of these "occupied" territories. For example, Dr. Jonathan Frankel, senior lecturer at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, and at the Department of Russian Studies, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, agrees in a recent issue of the *Jerusalem Post* that failure to give up these areas will reduce the country's Jewish population by the year 2000 to nearly, if not actually, to a minority status.

In fact, this change in the ratio of the Jewish and Arab populations may prove to be the most significant factor in the Middle East conflict. It may so drastically change the demographic complexion of Israel as to destroy the original goals of Zionism from within rather than from outside. Even as early as 1967, the Peace and Security Movement, an Israeli political party, argued that to annex the territories would force Israel to change either its Jewish or its democratic character. Lately one prominent Israeli leader, Shmuel Katz, has been telling his people that they must accustom themselves to live with a *large Arab* minority.

Recently two of the leading demographers of Israel, D. Friedlander and C. Goldscheider, have published a series of demographic projections concerning the Jewish and Arab population. Their study, published in *the Journal of Conflict*

Resolution, 1974, indicates that in Israel, excluding the territories occupied since 1967, the Arab population has been rising on average about 4 per cent, one of the highest growth rates in the world. If this trend continues, the study concludes, that the Arab population within the pre-1967 boundaries alone will be over one million. Even in the occupied areas, the Arab numbers have been increasing at the rate of more than 2 per cent. It is estimated that, by 1975, their population had already risen above 1,100,000.

On the other hand, the birth rate among the Jewish population is not only considerably lower, but it has also been steadily dropping. This study indicates that the only way to counter the sharp rise in the Arab population is an extraordinary rate of Jewish immigration from abroad. However, the fact remains that the natural sources of mass Jewish immigration have all but exhausted. Even if a majority of the Jews in South Africa and Argentina arrive in Israel, it will not make any significant difference. The Jews of the United States and Western Europe are not expected to move to Israel in large numbers, nor is there much of a likelihood that the U.S.S.R. will order any mass expulsion of the Jews.

In other words, as Dr. Frankel explains, the demographic tides are running against Israel more powerfully than even most of the anti-annexationists anticipated in 1967. Professors Friedlander and Goldscheider conclude that "with the maximalist territorial settlement (the retention of *all* occupied territories) the Jewish population moves toward a clear numerical minority by the year 2000." Alternately the Arabs, unless forcefully expelled, will constitute an absolute majority.

It is obvious that, as Dr. Frankel observes, notwithstanding any external developments, "the perpetuation of the present demographic process must, consequently, produce the most far-reaching changes in Israel's political system." What has not been accomplished by the Arab states in the

last thirty years may very well be done by the present policies of the Israeli government. Or, as Dr. Frankel has very poignantly described, "It means in effect the abolition of the Jewish State from within in the name of defending it from without."

DELIVERANCE OF JESUS FROM THE CROSS

By

B. A. Rafiq, Imam of the London Mosque

The Ahmadiyya Community of the United Kingdom will, *Insha Allah*, be holding an international conference on The Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of June, 1978. Apart from the proceedings of the conference, there will be an exhibition of relevant books, magazines, newspaper cuttings and slide shows. Provision has also been made for informing the media and representatives from local and international press, radio and television services will be able to attend a press conference and hold interviews with appropriate authorities.

The idea of holding this conference was conceived from the genuine interest generated over the past few years by Orientalists and Historians whose curiosity has been aroused by research on the life of Jesus Christ, his resurrection, the theory that after Crucifixion he travelled across to Kashmir where there is strong evidence of the presence of Christ and the fact that a number of articles have been written on these subjects. Scientific experiments are due to be carried out in May, 1978, at Turin, Italy, on the piece of cloth reported to bear the image of Jesus Christ to prove the authenticity of the Shroud when this preserved and closely guarded cloth is subjected to a public display at an international conference of leading historians and scientists.

As a result of this interest, it is patently obvious that the Christian belief of resurrection will be on trial again. A number of non-Muslim scholars now believe that Jesus did not die on the Cross and that the body which was taken to the airy chamber was that of a Living Jesus and that he may have travelled eastwards to Afghanistan, Kashmir, etc. At the moment, it appears that the preliminary conferences leading up to the May 1978 Turin Conference would have proved the validity of the theory that Jesus did not die on the Cross and

that a major breakthrough would have been achieved in exploding the myth and mystery surrounding Jesus Christ.

It was the Promised Messiah who expounded the truth contained in the Holy Quran that Jesus of Nazareth did not die as a result of crucifixion but that he swooned on the Cross and was mistaken to be dead. The Promised Messiah revealed for the first time and provided substantiating medical and historical evidence in addition to commenting on the Gospel accounts that Jesus survived crucifixion, that he resuscitated and travelled eastwards to Kashmir where he died a natural death. For us, as Ahmadies, the increasing interest in the relevance of the Shroud of Turin and the research on his deliverance from the Cross bears special significance. There are few non-Ahmadies who admit to this thesis, let alone acknowledge that it was the Promised Messiah who, from Divine revelation, first made claim to this treatise.

The Ahmadiyya Community of United Kingdom has seized this opportunity of attaching relevance to this subject owing to the potentials it provides for preaching Ahmadiyyat. The first stage of this grand project is in the summoning of an Ahmadiyya Conference of the Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross to be held in the first week of June, 1978, shortly after the Turin Conference. It is intended to assert as often as possible that it was God Almighty Who revealed the truth through the Promised Messiah that Jesus Christ lies buried in Kashmir. For the greatest impact, it is the Community's objective to collate and present all corroborating evidence at one place and to broadcast and exhibit it to the general public. To help achieve this objective at the Conference:

1. Research papers and theses will be presented by leading scientists, orientalist and historians on this subject.
2. Various books and references will be collated for exhibition purposes and will be later compiled into a select bibliography.

3. Relevant literature ranging from *Jesus In India* to publications by the Community to date will be reprinted and made available for distribution and sale.
4. Leading orientalist and church authorities will be invited to attend to present their thesis.
5. Copies of newspaper cuttings, reviews, radio and television broadcast topics and a film on the proceedings of the Conference will be collected for further distribution on a world-wide scale.
6. Hazrat Ch. Muhammad Zafrullah Khan has written a book on this subject which will soon be published.

When the U.K. Ahmadiyya Community presented this ambitious scheme to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III for approval, it enclosed a humble request to Huzur to attend the Conference in person to declare it open and to address it at its closing session. Huzur has noted the scheme with pleasure, made certain recommendations and graciously accepted the invitation to attend the Conference in person.

While we request all members of the Community to pray for the success of the Conference, we seek your timely assistance and valuable suggestions. If any member has any rare document, photograph or subject matter, we shall be pleased to receive this for exhibition purposes on a temporary loan. Your material will be with us on personal guarantees for its security and will be returned with our grateful thanks. Those members who intend to attend this conference should notify the London Mosque so that further information may be sent to them.

LIFE SKETCH OF THE FIRST CALIPH, HAZRAT MAULANA HAKEEM NOORUD-DIN

By
Saleem A. Nasir

With the passage of time, old impressions get efaced and new ones emerge to the forefront and receive prominence. Certain matters and actions relating to the apparently fading memories are so important for national life that these should be necessarily kept alive for the coming generations.

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam is a dynamic community in the entire Muslim world which has been entrusted with a great obligation of bringing out renaissance and revival of the religion of Islam. As a matter of fact, this commitment has distinguished each one of us and the community as a whole, from the rest of the world.

To achieve this objective we have to prepare ourselves in different directions and aspects. One of these directions is to keep ourselves abreast of the information about noble deeds and history of our forefathers. By doing so we can follow their footsteps and shape our lives into their pattern and model. Besides that we could accomplish as far as possible that kind of service which they have rendered in their lifetimes. With this object in mind, I will try to bring out a few bright and prominent features of the life of our First Caliph of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him). I hope it will provide a spiritual flavor to our hearts and souls.

The entire life of Hazrat Maulana was full of interesting and graceful events which refresh and strengthen one's faith. It was a real problem for me to decide what events should I select for today's discussion.

Hazrat Maulana held unparalleled position in learning and excellence, piety and Godliness, ablution and purity,

reverence, veneration and adoration for his Imam, the Promised Messiah. Before I discuss these virtues, I would like to mention very briefly his personal background.

He was born in the year 1840, in the town of Bhera in Panjab, in a Quraishi family, having a distinguished ancestry of Hazrat Umar Farooq, and therefore, was a glorious son of Hazrat Umar, the second Caliph of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). It was a time when there existed few regular institutions of learning in the Indian sub-continent. Besides, the means of transportation were extremely hopeless. For the attainment of knowledge one had to approach individually the renowned scholars of the time; it being entirely at the discretion of these scholars to allow the seekers of knowledge to their pupilage.

Hazrat Maulana had a deep love for the study of the Holy Quran and Hadith, the Traditions of the Holy Prophet, and the rest of Islamic studies. Besides that, he developed a keen interest in the science of medicine, especially in the indigenous system of medicine popularly known as *Tibbe Unani*. Since there were practically no such institutions which could offer opportunities for these subjects, Hazrat Maulana travelled a lot in the pursuit of this noble end, in India and other middle eastern countries. Many times he had to travel on foot. As a result of this, his feet used to develop wounds and swelling. To satisfy his burning desire and great eagerness for the attainment of knowledge he undertook a voyage to as far as Mecca and Medina and stayed there for a couple of years.

After many years of wandering over far and distant places to achieve his goal, he returned home. On his recourse, he started his medical practice on the one hand and saintly line of delivering sermons on the other. The contemporary Muslim priests of the area opposed him lest he should gain popularity but in no time his reputation tra-

velled all over the country and he was accepted as a great Muslim scholar, in addition to being an expert physician. A few apparently incurable patients, with the Grace of God, received redress and were finally cured through his able hands. The result was that the Rajah of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, hearing about his expertise in medical profession, wrote to him, requesting him to accept the position of his personal physician. Hazrat Maulana accepted this offer and held this reputable office for about eight years.

In spite of his high degree of learning, his ability in the science of medicine, he had a great deal of humility in his nature, and was still looking for a perfect guide and leader to follow. He had a crave and a strong feeling of search, so vehement that he was always on the lookout for the call of a true, faithful, devout and veracious crusader of Islam: The moment he heard of the call of the Promised Messiah, he conjectured, and certainly very truly conjectured, that he was the one long awaited and desired by him.

Hazrat Maulana said that on hearing this call, he fell on his knees and prostrated before God to offer his gratitude. At the first possible opportunity he left for Qadian. He said that during this most significant journey and specially when he reached closer to Qadian, he prayed intensely to God Almighty in a state of anxiety with shivering and trembling heart. As soon as he had the opportunity to see the Promised Messiah, he said to himself in a most affectionate state of heart: "He is the Mirza, may I be sacrificed for thee."

His search was now over and in his very first meeting he requested his holiness to take his oath of allegiance and accept him as his disciple. His holiness answered that he could not take any step without the order and authorization of God. At that moment, Hazrat Maulana very humbly requested to his holiness to make a promise to have his oath of allegiance first, as soon as he receives such order

from God Almighty. This was promised and later on he was the first person who was administered the oath of allegiance and thus became the first companion of the Promised Messiah.

The sincerity and truth of his firm belief in the Promised Messiah can very easily be judged from one of his many many writings addressed to His Holiness, the Promised Messiah. He expressed his feelings of devotion and dedication in these words:

“My dearest Mirza, assign me a position under your footsteps. I pray to God to have His pleasure and condescension by every possible means. If the mission of your holiness needs human blood for its irrigation then this humble creature (but most loving) loves to have the needful done.”

This is a point which needs some thought. A widely travelled, seasoned veteran who is highly regarded for his pietistic, scholastic and sanctimonious qualities all over the Indian subcontinent, so humbly throws himself down at the feet of His Holiness, as soon as he hears about him.

At this stage I would like to give a few instances of his complete and incomparable obedience and dedication to the Promised Messiah.

1. After relinquishing his job as personal physician to the Rajah of Kashmir, he decided to stay at Bhera, his birthplace, permanently. He intended to start his private practice there. He planned to build his residence and a clinic for this purpose. He initiated the construction of the building. During this construction phase, he had to go to Lahore to purchase certain construction materials. After finishing his work in Lahore, he thought of making a quick trip to Qadian to visit the Promised Messiah. He was pressed for time and it was rather difficult to make this side trip, but he decided to go to Qadian anyway, just to

see the Promised Messiah and immediately return to Bhera. When he arrived at Qadian and visited His Holiness, the Promised Messiah remarked: "You are free nowadays, having no pressing occupations. Are you not?" "Yes, your holiness," he replied. He thought it a little awkward and improper to beg for leave at that time. He had come for a very brief visit and had hired a horse carriage for a trip to Qadian and back to Batala, where he could get other transportation to Bhera. The carriage was waiting outside for him. But he went out and asked the driver to go back since he did not have the leave to go back right away. The next time the Promised Messiah saw him, he asked him to send for his wife from Bhera so he would not be lonely in Qadian. He did so accordingly and she joined him in Qadian. Later, the Promised Messiah asked him to bring his library to Qadian, since he was so fond of reading. At a later time, the Hazrat asked the Maulana to forget about his hometown Bhera and never think about it any longer. He said from that point on, he never thought of or even dreamed about his home town and stayed at Qadian for the rest of his life.

2. Hazrat Maulana was the family physician of an influential person in Bhera. This person once wrote to him that he was suffering from some serious illness and asked Hazrat Maulana to kindly go to Bhera and examine him. The Maulana wrote back that he never leaves Qadian without the permission of the Promised Messiah. If this person wanted him to go to Bhera, he should write to His Holiness. He wrote to the Promised Messiah accordingly and the Hazrat asked the Maulana to go to Bhera and examine this person. The Maulana went to Bhera, examined the patient, gave him prescription and straightaway returned to Qadian. Just imagine, he did not go to see his relatives or his old friends, nor had he ever thought of seeing the building which he had left while under construction.

3. Once he was in his clinic in Qadian when a messen-

ger arrived to tell him that the Promised Messiah wanted to see him. He instantly stood up and rightaway left the clinic. An observer says that he was going in such a hasty state that he was dragging his shoes trying to put them on while setting his turban on his head at the same time, fearing that he might not make the slightest delay in compliance.

4. A person of Hindu faith once came from Batala, a neighboring town, saying that his wife was in a precarious condition and asking him to please attend to her. He said he could not move out of Qadian unless the Promised Messiah asked him to do so. So this person went to the Promised Messiah and presented his problem. Huzur asked the Maulana to go and attend to his problem and hoped he will be back the same evening. So the Maulana went to Batala, attended to this patient, gave her the prescription and got ready to come back. By now it was dark and it was raining very hard. Everyone advised Hazrat Maulana to stay overnight and leave in the morning. Moreover, he was told that it was not safe to travel alone at night. Hazrat Maulana had only one answer: His Holiness had desired him to return the same day. He was, therefore, going back regardless of the circumstances. He proceeded back despite the rain and had to wade through pools of water, but he made it back before dawn. In the morning prayers, the Promised Messiah asked if Maulvi Noorud Din could return last night. Before anyone else could reply, the Maulana rose up and said: "Yes, Your Holiness, I returned last night." He did not even mention the circumstances under which he had to travel back.

He had a keen sense of honor for God. Once he visited his sister at Bhera who had lost her son a little earlier, struck with dysentery. During his stay, a patient of the same disease was recovered by his treatment. His sister remarked that if he was present at the time of her son's illness, he could have survived. The Hazrat smelled a touch of infideli-

ty in her voice said to her that she may get another son who may die of the same disease while he was present. The following year she did get a son and perhaps a year later the Hazrat visited her. While he was staying there, the boy became ill with dysentery. His sister, remembering the previous dialogue, requested him to pray for her son. The Hazrat told her to forget this boy, God will give her another son who will live. This is exactly what happened.

Trust in God Almighty. He was completely resigned to the will of God and had a high degree of trust in him. These attributes are reflected in his everyday life. Whenever he had any problem or had need of money, God helped him through invisible and hidden means. Many times it happened that he took some journey and he had at times no money even to eat or train fare, but God never disappointed him. He always got the help needed even at the last moment. I will cite one example to illustrate his degree of trust and confidence in God and God's exceptional treatment with him.

When he ended up his job with the Rajah of Kashmir, he was under debt to the tune of 195,000 rupees. One of his friends commented thus: "Molvi Sahib, do you remember I used to advise you to set aside a part of your income for rainy days. If you had done so, you would have felt a bit comfortable at this abrupt discontinuation of service. How will you be able to repay the big amount of loan?" He very confidently replied that God knows everything and He would make arrangements for the repayment of this debt.

It is really very interesting to know how this debt was paid. The Rajah of Kashmir, after letting the Maulana go, had second thoughts about the injustice he had done to the Maulana and himself. He requested the Maulana to return to his employ, but the Maulana replied he would never leave Qadian even if the kingdom of the world was offered

to him. The Rajah then thought of another way to compensate his earlier services.

Every year, the Rajah used to call for tenders (bids) and issue contracts of the forests of the Kashmir valley. This time he announced that he would give the contract to one who will give one half of his profit to Molvi Noorud Din. The contract was issued and at the end of the season, the contractor prepared his accounts and found that he had made a net profit of 390,000 rupees. Accordingly half of this amount, or 195,000 rupees, was presented to Maulana Noorud Din. This was exactly equal to the total debt the Maulana had. He instructed the contractor to give this money to his creditor.

Next year, the contract was awarded with the same stipulations by the Rajah so the contractor brought half of his profit to Hazrat Maulana. The Maulana refused to accept it. Someone asked why he had not accepted this year while he did accept the last year. The Maulana answered that God had promised to clear his debt and therefore He sent that money to him. Why should he take anything now that he had no debts left.

Complements of the Promised Messiah. The Promised Messiah said that he had made intense prayers to God to give him a helper, so God gave him a Siddique, referring to Hazrat Noorud Din. Now Siddique is an appellation of Hazrat Abu Bakr, the first Caliph of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). By this statement the Promised Messiah had exposed a secret. This was about the appointment of Hazrat Noorud Din as the first Caliph of the Promised Messiah, just as Abu Bakr was the first disciple of the Holy Prophet and his first Caliph.

The Promised Messiah further said that the person he was referring to as Siddique was Noorud Din. "When he came to me, I forgot all my sorrows, woes and grievances,.

His financial contributions helped me so much that it was unparalleled. He has no match whatsoever throughout the whole world. I comprehended at the very first sight that he one of the signs of God, and believe that he was the reward of my prayers. He does not have the least sense of pride or self-complacence. Light and splendour of God descends upon him so vigorously and vehemently as if he is a rest house for heavenly light and luminosity."

**KNOWLEDGE TRIUMPHANT:
THE CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE IN
THE QURAN AND THE HADITH**

By

Dr. Rab Nawaz Malik

The purpose of this paper is to trace the idea of Muslim education as enumerated by the Quran and elaborated by the Prophet. Our aim is to bring to light the Islamic pronouncements about education or matters related to education. However, it must be stated at the outset that it would be highly presumptuous to expect to find, in either the Quran or the Hadith, a systematically worked out theory of education. The best one can hope for is to find certain general statements about knowledge and the necessity of acquiring it. The task at hand, i.e., a definitive and objective description of what we find in these sources, instead of attempting to harmonize it with a preconceived plan.

The year 610 A.D. is of utmost importance in the history of Muslim education. It was during that year that the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, received his first revelation from God. In this revelation, the purpose of his mission was clearly stated. It was, among other things, to awaken humanity to the importance of the cultivation of learning. God's unmistakable command to him was to open the gates of knowledge for mankind by teaching them the Book and Wisdom.¹ A man who is traditionally reputed to have been illiterate² immediately proclaimed himself as one "who has been raised up as a teacher (Muallim)³ with a book, the Quran, given to him by God Himself." It was a perfect book, containing, as it did, all that was necessary for guidance for all mankind for all times.⁴ The faithful were exhorted to read the book and learn its meanings so that they could pattern their lives and conduct in accordance with its commands. The Prophet was enjoined to spread the Divine message enshrined in the Book.

Clearly then, the Prophet of Islam was the first Muslim

teacher and educational philosopher, one whose ideas about education and other pertinent subjects rested on Divine Authority. Therefore, one needs to turn to the Quran, and the sayings of the Prophet (Hadith) to discover the theoretical principles that underlie Muslim thinking on the subject of education.

Although the Quran furnishes the foundations of what may broadly be termed the Muslim educational outlook, we find in it only general references to knowledge (*ilm*): its sources, its acquisition, and its diffusion to those who will partake of it. Nevertheless, one can, without becoming immersed in the intricacies of Quranic exegesis, refer to certain verses which appear to form the theoretical core of educational principles of Islam.

According to the Quran, there are two sources of human knowledge: (1) revelations, (2) experience. The first source is accessible only to a chosen few, namely, the Prophets; the second, on the other hand, is open to all.⁶

The Quran:

The Holy Quran begins its discussion of knowledge (knowledge of all sorts) and the importance of its cultivation and acquisition, by stating that knowledge is power and virtue and that there are no limits to how much of it one can acquire.⁷ Such limits as may be imposed are determined by the individual himself. It goes on to say that people with knowledge are the lords of those who have less or no knowledge.⁸ Moreover, knowledge and learning are the gift of God, who blesses with it those who do not know and are likely to remain ignorant without His help and without their own efforts.⁹ The Quran distinguishes the learned from the ignorant and asserts that the former are superior to the latter. In fact, the learned are the leaders of men and nations.¹⁰ They are said to be second in rank only to God, and first among all created things.¹¹ Even the angels pay homage to them, because of their "knowledge of things" in the world.¹²

This is why, perhaps, they are exhorted to address their prayers to God only and to plead for increase in knowledge and wisdom.¹⁴

After showering such praise on the learned, the Quran delineates their duties. Their foremost duty appears to be to enlighten others on matters of common concern and current interest.¹⁵ Also they are seemingly obligated to spread their ideas through writings and by teaching.¹⁶ Lest the learned should become too proud of their God-given knowledge and erudition, the Quran warns: "You have received only a minute quantity of knowledge," thereby making search for knowledge a persistent endeavor.¹⁷

It is not difficult to see from the foregoing that the Quranic injunctions on the subject under discussion are not very elaborate. In such case, one may legitimately inquire why it is necessary to acquire knowledge at all. It is not sufficient to say that one should devote one's self to learning merely because acquisition of knowledge is good in the eyes of God. Secondly, the notion that knowledgeable people are superior in rank to those who have no knowledge seems to militate against the clear Quranic precept that all men are equal in the eyes of their Creator, be they educated or ignorant. We shall presently consider the first point, in some detail. As to the second, suffice it to say that God commands each to strive to become equal with, if not to surpass, every other in virtue, wisdom, and knowledge. To speak of "equality" in ignorance, misery, and vice is a travesty, an outrage, on the concept of equality as expounded by the Quran. The ignorant, says the Holy Book, will be punished in this world and also in the next.¹⁸ They will get what they deserve.

To the first point, i.e., why knowledge should be acquired at all, the Quran devotes considerable attention. It instructs us that human life has a two-fold purpose: (1) to live a fruitful and productive life in this world, and (2) to strive for salvation in the life to come. Further, we find in the Quran

that all that God has created in the heavens and on earth is for the benefit of man, the best of all His creation, and that it is man's duty to take advantage of it. Let us turn to the Holy Book when it says:

*Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and caused water to come down from the clouds, and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance; and He has subjected to you the ships that they may sail through the sea by His command, and the rivers too has He subjected to you. And he has made subservient to you the sun and the moon, both performing their work constantly. And He has subjected to you the night as well as the day. And He gave you all that you wanted of Him; and if you try to count the favors of Allah, you will not be able to number them. Verily man is very unjust, very ungrateful.*¹⁹

And again:

*And He has pressed into service for you the night and the day, and the sun and the moon; and the stars too have been pressed into service by His command. Surely, in that are signs for a people who make use of their reason. And He has pressed into service the things He has created for you in the earth, varying in colors. Surely in that is a sign for a people who take heed. And He it is Who has subjected to you the sea that you may eat therefrom fresh meat, and may take forth therefrom ornaments which you wear. And thou seest the ships ploughing through it, that you may seek His Bounty and that you may be grateful. And He has placed in the earth firm mountains lest it quake with you, and rivers and routes that you may take the right way. And other landmarks too; and by the stars they follow the right direction. Is He then, Who creates, like one who creates not? Will you not then take heed?*²⁰

We have quoted the Quran at length to show the comprehensive nature of its message. These verses omit little in nature that is not of some service to mankind. Much that we need for our daily lives is stated here in no uncertain terms.

To be sure, human requirements change with changing times; they have been changing ever since the Holy Prophet proclaimed his message. But we have here, I think, a key with which to open the treasure-house (this vast field of inquiry that nature presents) to discover things and mold them to meet our needs. The verses, moreover, appear to command us to cultivate all branches of various sciences - physics, astronomy, navigation, mining, and so forth.²¹

It is also noteworthy that all these Quranic verses, and others like them, conclude with phrases such as the following: "There is a sign in it for a people who reflect," "who ponder," "who have sense," "who are men of understanding," "who are mindful," "who are learned." In nature there are "signs for those who see," "who listen," "who are wise," and, "take heed," "who know," and "use their intellect". It was, perhaps, because of this constant appeal to reason and experience that led Iqbal to say that it was Islam that created and fostered the modern spirit of critical observation and empirical attitude. "The birth of Islam", he wrote, was "the birth of inductive intellect."²² Therefore, Iqbal thought, to give credit to Roger Bacon or Francis Bacon for having introduced the experimental method in modern (at least Newtonian) science was a "colossal misinterpretation" of facts. At any rate, according to Iqbal, Roger Bacon had studied at Muslim universities.²³

Be that as it may, faculties of mind, referred to above, cannot develop without our eating the fruits of the tree of knowledge, or so says the Quran.²⁴ We can hardly begin to "reflect" or "ponder" or "understand" or "see" or "be wise", in a vacuum. To do so, we must seemingly interact with our surroundings or environment or the confronting situation; in short, with our "world of effect." That is why the Quran repeatedly calls attention to the multifarious phenomena of nature occurring around us; repeatedly it exhorts us that pursuit of their knowledge is a duty. It emphasizes, again and again, that everything in nature was created by God

for the service of man and should be harnessed by him for his own use and enjoyment.²⁵ It makes the universe, as it were, a university and the elements of nature a book, open and ready to be read by those who are mindful. Thus, the whole universe is a fertile field for inquiry and investigation, and the Quran demands that we engage in such inquiry.²⁶ Those who cannot or will not heed these clear directives are likely to pass their earthly lives as if they were "deaf and blind," and will remain so to the realities of the life to come.²⁷

It is truly astonishing to see that the Quran is full, from the beginning to the end, of most unequivocal and vehement denunciations of unimaginative imitation, enjoining original thinking and personal investigation.²⁸ As far as we can judge, no other religious book has laid so much stress on the study of nature, not merely as the pious wonderment at the natural phenomenon. The sun, the moon, the tide, the approaching night, the far-flung stars, the dawning day, the rivers, the lofty mountains, the gushing falls, the plant and animal life - presenting them all in the testimony of the laws of nature. After drawing attention to these wonders of nature, the Quran always returns to its favorite theme: knowledge is unending; it must be acquired; the whole universe was made to serve the needs of man - the agent of God in this world.²⁹

The Prophet:

When we turn from the Quran to the Hadith, we find the Quranic outlook on ilm (knowledge) not only confirmed but also further elucidated. Here again it is possible, without going into questions of criticism of authenticity, to mention representative sayings that appear to reflect the views of the prophet on educational matters.³⁰ What follows is a close paraphrase of pertinent excerpts of Hadith, gathered from various sources.³¹ The traditional style has been utilized whenever deemed essential.

While speaking of the importance of knowledge, the

Prophet is reported to have said:

*Seek you knowledge from the cradle to the grave. Knowledge is like a lost treasure for the believer; he seeks it even if it be in China. To seek knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and woman. Acquire knowledge because he who acquires it performs an act of piety. He who travels in quest of knowledge, to him Allah shows the way; he walks in the path of Allah. Who goes forth in search of knowledge, God will not let his labors go unrewarded in this world and in the world hereafter. He who dies while engaged in acquiring knowledge with a view to spreading it will be granted God's blessings in the next world. He dies not who takes to learning.*³²

To continue:

Knowledge is necessary for material and moral well-being. It can only be acquired through study. Desire for knowledge is a Divine commandment for every Muslim; it enables its possessor to distinguish between right and wrong; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, and companion when bereft of friends; it serves as an armor against our enemies. With knowledge, the servant of God (man) rises to the heights of goodness and glory; it enables him to associate with sovereigns in this world and helps him attain eternal bliss in the next. The day on which I (the Prophet) have learned nothing is no part of my life. Absence of knowledge will signal the end of the world, because ignorant people decide foolishly and therefore destroy themselves.

And finally:

There are two persons that one is permitted to envy: The one to who God has given riches and who has the courage to spend them in search for truth; the other to whom God has given knowledge and wisdom and who applies it for the benefit of mankind and shares it with

his fellows. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets. Honor the learned; he who honors the learned honors me (the Prophet). A learned man is as superior to an ignorant worshiper as a full moon is superior to all the stars. To listen to the words of the learned and to grasp their meanings is better than religious exercises. One learned man is better than a thousand ignorant worshipers. The ink of the scholar is more precious than the blood of the martyr. A seat of learning is garden of heaven. Of all the labors for which one may take reward, teaching is the most deserving.

These are eloquent words, beautifully expressed. That they came from the tongue of an unlettered man - that son of the desert, that denizen of Arabia - is not a matter of surprise. After all, God had appointed him as a teacher for all mankind. These pronouncements - call them aphorisms or what you will - certainly entitle the Prophet of Islam to a place of high honor among those who have profoundly influenced the educational and cultural heritage of the human race. Only the most provincial concept of education would gainsay the legitimacy of placing Muhammad among the great educators of all times. He who speaks in terms such as the foregoing of the importance of acquiring education and who praises the learned in such glowing phrases can hardly be termed other than a prince among educators. Why most of the "readers" of the Quran, and presumably the "followers" of the Prophet, are among the most illiterate, poor, diseased, superstitious, and fanatical people in the world of today is a profound riddle which cries for an answer.

At any rate, the Quranic precepts and the words of the Prophet ought not to be dismissed as mere pious platitudes; they did not fall wholly on deaf ears. What is more, they spiritualized all knowledge, and with Muslims, its acquisition became a sacred duty. As a seeming result, within the Prophet's lifetime the whole of Arabia became a center of feverish educational activity.³³ Further it is nothing short of

a miracle that in a relatively few years the camel-driving nomads of the desert became the teachers, nay the intellectual masters, of the world. They laid the foundations of what we nowadays call the modern educational system.³⁴

Muslim writers through the centuries have taken great pains to enumerate those characteristics of Islam which they believe set it apart from all previous religions, thereby giving it an identity all its own. For example, they point out that the Quranic concept of God, the universal nature of the Quranic message, its attempts at synthesizing all previous religious doctrines, abolition of the priesthood,³⁵ the notion of man's accountability for his actions to God alone, the elimination of dualism between the religious and the non-religious, and equal emphasis, in terms of importance, on the life of this world and the next are characteristics peculiar to Islam.

Be that as it may, for the purposes of this study, the only point that we wish to make is that, if one wants to distinguish Islam from other religious doctrines, one may emphasize its exhortations, entirely novel in the annals of religious thought, as to the importance of acquiring and spreading knowledge, and on distinctly utilitarian grounds.

All other religions before Islam, including Christianity, kept silent on this all-important subject. From Adam to Jesus, no messenger from God is reported to have said more than little, if anything, about the matter of education. We find the same state of affairs when we turn to teachers of other religions. For example, though some branches of knowledge were cultivated by the Hindus of old, such cultivation was always confined to a priestly class. The lower classes in the Hindu caste system were strictly prohibited from interesting themselves in learning or teaching.³⁶

In the light of this, it can be seen that it was the prophet from Arabia who made knowledge an essential of faith for his followers. He knew neither how to read nor how to write,

but he drew men's attention to the importance of acquiring knowledge, because he thought it to be necessary in order to make full use of God's gifts to mankind. He, and the Book that he brought with him, told us of the treasures that lay hidden in seas and mountains, and in the heavens and on (as well as in) the earth. It is generally acknowledged that the Muslims accepted the prophetic gospel about the virtues of knowledge, and that they set about to discover in God's creation all they could that was for their benefit and improvement. They employed themselves with enthusiasm in discovering and acquiring such knowledge as would enable them to succeed in this new pursuit, and the foundations of modern science were thus laid with astounding success.³⁷

Thus far, we have been primarily concerned with the theoretical aspects of Muslim education as enunciated in the Quran and as elaborated by the Prophet. We have also hinted at their impact on the intellectual life of The newly born Muslim community. Now we need to consider, albeit briefly, the educational activities of Muslims during the lifetime of the Prophet.

The period prior to the advent of Islam is generally referred to in Muslim history as the *Jahiliyya* (the time of ignorance). Those familiar with the history of pre-Islamic Arabia are agreed that this judgement is not altogether erroneous.³⁸ Immediately after Islam saw the light of day, however, the Prophet set out to eradicate illiteracy among his followers. No doubt the first task of the first Muslim teacher was to teach the new converts how to read the Quran, so that they might model their conduct on its precepts. This was done by the literate converts instructing the illiterate. It can, therefore, safely be said that the earliest Muslim educational activity was strictly religious in nature. This is not to say, however, that the prophet paid no attention to other areas of knowledge; to have done so would have been contrary to his own educational outlook. The fact of the matter is that he recommended, indeed encouraged, the study of mathematics,

medicine, astronomy, and even foreign languages. Training in archery, swimming, and horse riding were also considered essential by him, thus giving due importance to the health of mind as well as body.³⁹

That he attached considerable importance to the acquisition of knowledge in general, not just religious knowledge, may be inferred from the conditions on which he released the prisoners of war after his victory in the Battle of Badr (A.D. 624). He employed several captives to teach Muslims how to read and write, and this service counted as sufficient ransom for their release. Twelve boys were assigned to each of the prisoners who was capable of giving such instructions, and as soon as the pupils had attained the stipulated degree of progress, their teachers were set at liberty.⁴⁰ This, surely, is a rare example of its kind in the history of education⁴¹ and a high tribute to the first Muslim educator - an educator par-excellence. The result of such devotion to the cause of education was that literacy spread rapidly. Indeed, the Quran prescribed compulsory records of contracts or transactions between two individuals, with a view of protecting them both, and avoiding doubt and suspicion in dealings between men,⁴² which itself promoted literacy.

The Prophet passed away on June 8, 632 A.D. A few months earlier, on March 7, 632, he had delivered his "last lecture," famed in Muslim history as the "farewell address." It should be interesting to see what he had to say. He said in part:

Oh! Ye people, listen to me, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this to be amongst you... What I command you today is not meant only for today. It is meant for all time. You are expected to remember it and act upon it...

God has made the life, property, and honor of every man sacred. To take any man's life or his property, or attack his honor, is wrong and unjust.

Human beings are equal to one another. No one has any right, any superiority, to claim over another... All of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to and whatever station in life they may hold, are equal ... You are as brothers.

Oh! men, you have some rights against your wives, but your wives have some rights against you ... Remember, you must always treat your wives well ... provide them with adequate food, garments, and shelter. God has charged you with the duty of looking after them. You must not insult the trust which God has placed in your hands ...

You have in your possession some prisoners of war. I advise you, therefore, to feed them and clothe them in the same way and style as you feed and clothe yourselves ... They are part of God's creation. To give them pain and trouble can never be right ...

What I have said to you, you should communicate to the ends of the earth. Maybe those who have not heard me may benefit by it more than those who have heard.⁴³

The educational import of this message can hardly be exaggerated. At a time when slavery was considered as a natural condition, the Prophet advocated the doctrine of equality and human brotherhood; when women were regarded as mere chattle, he demanded that they be treated on terms equal with men; when depriving the weak and the helpless of their liberty, their property, and even their lives was favorite sport of the strong, he made personal property, life, and individual liberty inviolable. Muslim political philosophy did not have to wait for a Locke or a Mill or a Jefferson to grasp the importance of such concepts. What is more, the Prophet was not merely theorizing; he demanded action - action that was in accord with his commands. Surely that "last lecture" was preeminently worthy of the first Muslim teacher. As to whether those noble and lofty precepts

were ever fully or adequately followed and practiced by his followers is a question which modern Muslim scholarship must answer.

The century that followed the demise of the prophet was, for Muslims, a period of expansion and consolidation. During this period, the Arabs emerged from their sandy habitat and poured forth into neighboring areas. By the year 732 A.D. (exactly one century after the death of the Prophet), they had already become the rulers of lands stretching from the Pyrenees to the Indus Valley, across Africa and into southwest and central Asia. Consequently, they were busily engaged in administering the expanding Muslim empire and instructing the new converts in the Quran and the Hadiths. Therefore, Muslim educational activities during this period did not progress far beyond those initiated during the lifetime of the Prophet. In the main, they were confined to religious instructions and elementary mathematics, medicine, law and astronomy.⁴⁴ The real Muslim intellectual upheaval was to come later.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Quran: 62:2.
2. The Quran: 7:157.
3. Tibawi, A.L., *Muslim Education in the Golden Age of Caliphate*, Islamic Culture: Vol. XXVIII (1954) p. 419.
4. The Quran: 2:3.
5. The Quran: 17:14.
6. Iqbal, in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 139-140, postulates a third source, i.e., history, and is able to muster certain Quranic verses in support of his argument. For example, the Quran says that history should be studied to understand how and why nations and people rise and fall in power and glory (3:134). The moral of it all appears to be to avoid the fate of those who failed and to emulate the successful (3:131). However, it is our view that the term "experience", in its broadest sense, includes experience with both physical and social phenomena, including history, i.e., cumulative experience of mankind. Iqbal's excessive preoccupation with multiplying categories, as with definitions, does not, by itself, make for greater understanding. At times it might be even confusing, hence misleading.

7. The Quran: 55:34.
8. The Quran: 44:32.
9. The Quran: 67:26, 2:240.
10. The Quran: 39:9, 2:247.
11. The Quran: 13:77.
12. The Quran: 2:34.
13. The Quran: 35:27-28.
14. The Quran: 20:114.
15. The Quran: 4:85.
16. The Quran: 34:43.
17. The Quran: 17:87.
18. The Quran: 77:69.
19. The Quran: 14:32, 33, 34.
20. The Quran: 16:12-17.
21. For further elaboration see: Siddiqui, M. A. A., *Cultivation of Science by Muslims*. Halka Ishrat-e-Islam, Karachi (1936) pp.4-15.
22. Iqbal, M. op. cit., p. 126.
23. Iqbal, M. op. cit., p. 130.
24. The Quran: 96:3-5.
25. The Quran: 12:32.
26. The Quran: 2:171, 49:6.
27. Iqbal, M. op. cit., p. 128.
28. The Quran: 2:171, 49:6.
29. The Quran: 2:31.
30. It is almost impossible to establish the authenticity of the passages of Hadith relating to the subject of education, or on any other subject for that matter. However, a serious attempt has been made to select only those that are widely accepted as authentic.
31. Some of the sources are as follows:
 - a) Dodge, Bayard: *Muslim Education in Medieval Times*, Middle East Inst., Washington, D.C., 1962.
 - b) Gulick, R.R., *Muhammad the Educator*: Inst. of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1953.
 - c) Kamalud Din, Kh. *Islam and Civilization*: Muslim Mission, Woking, England, 1937.
 - d) Totah, Khalil A., *The Arab Contribution to Education*: Columbia U., N.Y., 1926.
 - e) Ali, Ameer, S., *A Short History of the Saracens*, MacMillan & Co., London, 1951.

32. The term "dies not" as used here need not be taken literally. To say that great men *never* die is not to say that they never stop breathing; it is to say that their name and fame live after they are gone. The same is true of great scholars.
33. Hamidullah, M., *Educational System in the Time of the Prophet*, Islamic Culture, Vol. XIV (1939), pp. 48-59.
34. Nakosteen, M., *History of Islamic Origins of Western Education*, U. of Colorado Press, 1964.
35. We are fully aware that in Western Christianity, Martin Luther advocated the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, a concept closely analogous to the Muslim view on the subject. However, in terms of history, Luther was a Johnny-come-lately, and might well have been a me-too-ist. Available evidence points to the possibility that he was familiar with Muslim religious writings. Anyhow, there is no doubt that he had, among other things, studied the Quran. See: Southern, R.W., *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, Harvard U. Press, Cambridge, 1962, pp. 104-109.
36. Ahmad, Hazrat Mirza Mahmud, *Introduction to the Study of Holy Quran*, Hollen Press, London, 1949, p. 74.
37. For detailed discussion (although not too good) of Muslim contributions in the field of science, see a monograph, by one Gabel Mazhak, titled: *Arab Contributions to European Civilization*. Place and date of publication not given.
38. Hitti, Phillip K., *The Arabs: A Short History*, Gateway Ed., N.Y., 1956, Chapter 2.
39. Islamic Culture, Vol. XIII (1939), op. cit., p. 57.
40. Ibid., p. 53.
41. The Romans are reported to have utilized their Grek captives in the same manner, but whether they did so on the basis of a contract (as the Prophet did) is not known to this writer.
42. The Quran: 2:283.
43. Ahmad, Hazrat Mirza Mahmud, op. cit., pp. 295-96.
44. Dodge, B., op. cit., p. 29.